

Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

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Judge tells agencies to restore webpages and data removed after Trump's executive order

By **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday ordered government agencies to restore public access to health-related webpages and datasets that they removed to comply with an executive order by President Donald Trump. U.S. District Judge John Bates in Washington agreed to issue a temporary restraining order requested by the Doctors for America advocacy group. The judge instructed the government to restore access to several webpages and datasets that the group identified as missing from websites and to identify others that also were taken down "without adequate notice or reasoned explanation."

On Jan. 20, his first day back in the White House, Trump signed an order for agencies to use the term "sex" and not "gender" in federal policies and documents. In response, the Office of Personnel Management's acting director required agency heads to



President Donald Trump speaks with reporters as he signs executive orders in the Oval Office at the White House, Monday, Feb. 10, 2025, in Washington.

eliminate any programs and take down any websites that promote "gender ideology."

Doctors for America, represented by the Public Citizen Litigation Group, sued OPM, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration and the De-

partment of Health and Human Services.

The nonprofit group cited the executive order's adverse impact on two of its members: a Chicago clinic doctor who would have consulted CDC resources to address a recent chlamydia outbreak in a high school and a Yale School

of Medicine doctor who relies on CDC resources about contraceptives and sexually transmitted infections.

"These doctors' time and effort are valuable, scarce resources, and being forced to spend them elsewhere makes their jobs harder and their treatment

less effective," the judge wrote.

The case is among dozens of lawsuits challenging executive orders that Trump, a Republican, issued within hours of his second inauguration.

The scrubbed material includes reports on HIV prevention, a CDC webpage for providing clinicians with guidance on reproductive health care and an FDA study on "sex differences in the clinical evaluation of medical products."

Removing important information from the CDC and FDA websites is delaying patient care, hampering research and hindering doctors' ability to communicate with patients, the plaintiffs' attorneys argued in a court filing.

"The agencies' actions create a dangerous gap in the scientific data available to monitor and respond to disease outbreaks, halt or hamper key health research, and deprive physicians of resources that impact clinical practice," they wrote. □

Associated Press

Senator seeks watchdog inquiry into Kash Patel, alleges behind-the-scenes role in purge at FBI

By **ERIC TUCKER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top Democratic senator has asked the Justice Department's inspector general to investigate after he says he received information that President Donald Trump's pick to lead the FBI, Kash Patel, had been "personally directing the ongoing purge" of agents at the bureau. The letter Tuesday from Sen. Dick Durbin, the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, asserts that Patel may have misled the panel at his confirmation hearing last month when he said in response to a question that he was not aware of any plans inside the FBI to punish or fire any agents.

The hearing took place just hours before news broke

that a group of senior FBI executives had been told either to resign or be fired, and one day before it was revealed that the Justice Department had demanded a list of thousands of

agents who worked on investigations related to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, a move some bureau employees fear could be a precursor to more expansive firings.



Kash Patel, President Donald Trump's choice to be director of the FBI, appears before the Senate Judiciary Committee for his confirmation hearing, at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025.

Associated Press

"It is unacceptable for a nominee with no current role in government, much less at the FBI, to personally direct unjustified and potentially illegal adverse employment actions against senior career FBI leadership and other dedicated, non-partisan law enforcement officers," Durbin wrote. "If these allegations are true, Mr. Patel may have perjured himself before the Senate Judiciary Committee."

Durbin's letter to Inspector General Michael Horowitz points to what he describes as "highly credible information from multiple sources" that he says shows Patel's involvement in that process. That includes contemporaneous notes from a Jan. 29 meeting between FBI and Justice Department

leaders that say "KP wants movement at FBI, reciprocal actions for DOJ," Durbin wrote.

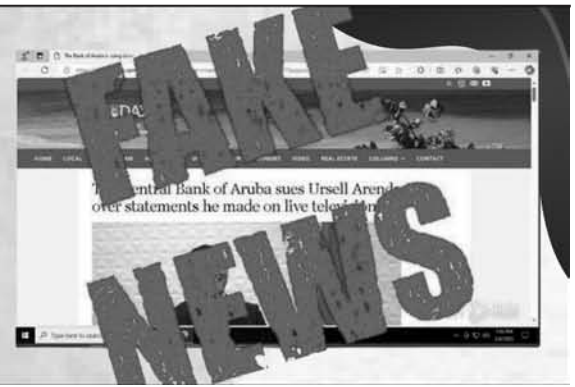
The senator also contends that he's learned from unidentified sources that Patel, despite not being confirmed yet as director, is receiving information about FBI operations from a member of a newly established advisory team inside the bureau and that he passes along that information to top White House official Stephen Miller.

Durbin says he's been told that a senior Justice Department official told others that Miller had been pressuring the Justice Department "because Mr. Patel wanted the FBI to remove targeted employees faster, as DOJ had already done with prosecutors." □

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Trump steel, aluminum tariffs likely to drive up car costs, industry leaders say

By ALEXA ST. JOHN
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — President Donald Trump's tariffs on steel imports this week could wreak havoc on American auto manufacturing, industry leaders say. The moves align with the Trump administration's aggressive global trade agenda and ambitions to strengthen U.S. industry, but they could have an inverse effect.

On March 12, all steel imports will be taxed at a minimum of 25%, the result of two orders the president signed Monday that also include a 25% tariff on aluminum. That could have a serious impact on domestic auto companies including Ford, GM and Stellantis and make these companies' vehicles more expensive for the nation's car buyers.

Tariffs on crucial products coming from outside of the U.S. places pressure on do-



An employee works on the production line at the Martinrea auto parts manufacturing plant that supplies auto parts to Canada and U.S. plants, in Woodbridge, Ontario, Monday, Feb. 3, 2025.

Associated Press

mestic sourcing of the materials, experts say. The basic rules of supply and demand could drive up costs. "Steel producers have to find ways to increase capacity, and aluminum

and steel might be in short supply in the short term," said Sam Fiorani, analyst at AutoForecast Solutions, which studies the industry. "Producing vehicles has a lot of moving parts, and

raising the price of what is among the most important components of the vehicle is only going to raise the price of an already expensive product."

The average transaction

price for a new vehicle in the U.S. in January was \$48,641, according to auto-buying resource Kelley Blue Book a hefty investment for an inflation-sensitive consumer.

"Tariffs such as these do nothing to enhance the automotive industry directly," Fiorani said.

To Ford CEO Jim Farley, Trump's early actions in office which also include 25% tariffs on goods coming from Mexico and Canada, although delayed by a month are already challenging the Dearborn, Michigan, automaker.

The Trump administration has also upended electric vehicle policy put in place under former President Joe Biden, targeted EV charging infrastructure, as well as directed review of vehicle emissions and fuel economy rules all of which could play a role in automaker plans to decarbonize. □

Russian cybercrime network targeted for sanctions across U.S., U.K. and Australia

By FATIMA HUSSEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S., U.K. and Australia on Tuesday sanctioned a Russian web-hosting services provider and two Russian men who administer the service in support of Russian ransomware syndicate LockBit.

The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control and its U.K. and Australian counterparts sanctioned Zservers, a Russia-based bulletproof hosting services provider which is a web-hosting service that ignores or evades law enforcement requests and two Russian nationals serv-

ing as Zservers operators. Treasury alleges that Zservers provided LockBit access to specialized servers designed to resist law enforcement actions.

LockBit ransomware attacks have extracted more than \$120 million from thousands of victims around the world. LockBit has operated since 2019, and is the most deployed ransomware variant across the world and continues to be prolific, according to the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

The Treasury Department's Acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial In-

telligence, Bradley T. Smith, said Tuesday's action "underscores our collective resolve to disrupt all aspects of this criminal ecosystem, wherever located, to protect our national security." LockBit has been linked to attacks on airplane manufacturer Boeing, the November 2023 attack against the Industrial Commercial Bank of China, the U.K.'s Royal Mail, Britain's National Health Service and international law firm Allen and Overy.

Ransomware is the costliest and most disruptive form of cybercrime, crippling local governments, court systems, hospitals and schools

as well as businesses. It is difficult to combat as most gangs are based in former

Soviet states and out of reach of Western justice. □



The U.S. Department of the Treasury building is seen in Washington, Nov. 18, 2024.

Associated Press

Hegseth renames North Carolina military base Fort Roland L. Bragg and signals more change coming

By **TARA COPP and LOLITA C. BALDOR**

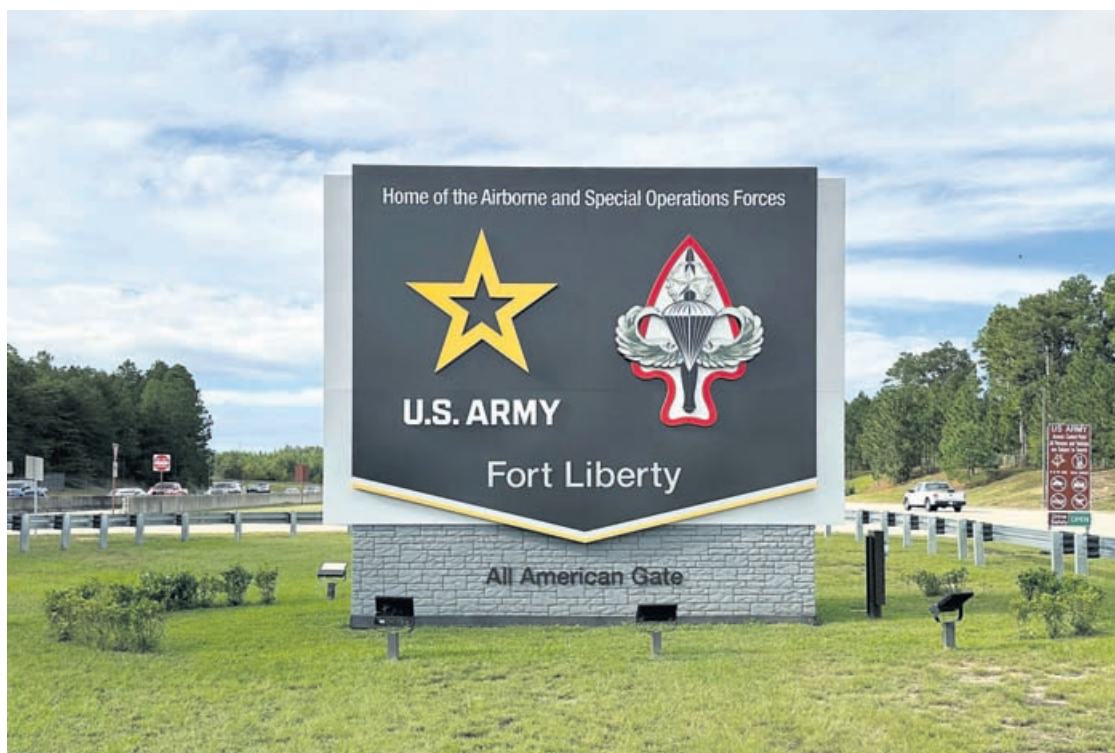
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has signed an order restoring the name of a storied special operations forces base in North Carolina back to Fort Bragg and said Tuesday that there will be more name changes coming.

Speaking to reporters in Germany, Hegseth hinted at a wholesale reversal of the broader Biden administration effort in 2023 to remove names that honored Confederate leaders, including nine Army bases. It sets up a potentially costly, complicated and delicate process that could run afoul of the law.

"As the president has said, and I've said as well, we're not done there," Hegseth said Tuesday when asked about the decision to revert the base name from Fort Liberty back to Fort Bragg, but changing the service member it commemorates. "I never called it Fort Liberty because it wasn't Fort Liberty. It's Fort Bragg."

Hegseth said the original name is a legacy for troops who lived and served there



Vehicles pass a sign for Fort Liberty, an Army installation near Fayetteville, N.C., on Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024.

Associated Press

and that it was a shame to change it. He said he deliberately referred to Bragg and Fort Benning the Army base in Columbus, Georgia, which is now called Fort Moore as he entered the Pentagon on his first day.

"There are other bases that have been renamed that erodes that very same legacy," he said. "There's a reason I said Bragg and

Benning when I walked into the Pentagon on day one. But it's not just Bragg and Benning. There are a lot of other service members that have connections. And we're going to do our best to restore it."

The North Carolina base was renamed Fort Liberty in 2023. Its original namesake, Gen. Braxton Bragg, was a Confederate general from Warrenton, North Carolina,

who was known for owning slaves and losing key Civil War battles, contributing to the Confederacy's downfall.

Hegseth is renaming the base to honor Pfc. Roland Bragg, who the Army said was a World War II hero who earned a Silver Star and Purple Heart for exceptional courage during the Battle of the Bulge.

The choice of the World

War II private first class got around a law prohibiting the military from naming a base after a Confederate leader. It sets up the potential for the Defense Department to do the same for the other eight Army bases that were renamed searching through massive military records for service members with the same last names who could be cited to revert to the former names.

That effort, however, also could be seen as a slap against some of the highly decorated service members whose names are now used for the bases. The former Fort Gordon in Georgia, for example, was renamed Fort Eisenhower to commemorate President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who led allied forces in Europe in World War II.

Fort Moore is named after Lt. Gen. Harold Gregory Moore Jr., who earned the Distinguished Service Cross for valor and fought in the Battle of Ia Drang in the Vietnam War.

Army officials said they do not have any cost estimates yet for changing the name again to Fort Bragg. □

4 FEMA employees are fired over payments to reimburse New York City for hotel costs for migrants

By **REBECCA SANTANA**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four federal employees were fired Tuesday over payments to reimburse New York City for hotel costs for migrants, Department of Homeland Security officials said.

The workers are accused of circumventing leadership to make the transactions, which have been standard for years through a program that helps with costs to care for a surge in migration. But officials did not give details on how the four had violated any policies. On Monday, President Donald Trump's aide Elon Musk posted on X that his team had discovered payments

used to house migrants in "luxury hotels" with money intended for disaster relief. Musk blasted the Federal Emergency Management

Agency, which is part of Homeland Security, and called the payments "gross insubordination."

FEMA's acting administra-

tor, Cameron Hamilton, later said the payments were suspended and the employees who authorized them would be held accountable.

The terminated employees were FEMA's chief financial officer, two program analysts and a grant specialist, a Homeland Security statement said.

The employees made "egregious payments for luxury NYC hotels for migrants," the statement said. "DHS will not sit idly and allow deep state activists to undermine the will and safety of the American people."

The statement gave no other details, and officials didn't reply to emails seek-

ing further comment.

Information from New York City indicated that money it has received to care for migrants was appropriated by Congress and allocated to the city last year by FEMA. The city has never paid luxury rates for hotels, spokeswoman Liz Garcia said.

The funds were likely sent via the Shelter and Services Program, which reimburses cities, towns or organizations for immigration-related expenses.

The money comes from Congress and is specifically for Customs and Border Protection, which also is part of Homeland Security. FEMA administers the payments. □



Migrants queue to enter the migrant shelter on Randall's Island, April 9, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

Netanyahu threatens to resume fighting in Gaza if hostages aren't released Saturday

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and SAM METZ

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday threatened to withdraw from the ceasefire in Gaza and directed troops to prepare to resume fighting Hamas if the militant group does not go ahead with the next scheduled release of hostages on Saturday.

Hamas said Monday and reiterated Tuesday that it planned to delay the release of three more hostages after accusing Israel of failing to meet the terms of the ceasefire, including by not allowing an agreed-upon number of tents and other aid into Gaza. Amid the mounting tensions, U.S. President Donald Trump emboldened Israel to call for the release of even more remaining hostages on Saturday.

After meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah II at the White House on Tuesday, Trump predicted Hamas would not release all the remaining hostages as he had demanded.

"I don't think they're going to make the deadline, personally," the president said of Hamas. "They want to play tough guy. We'll see how tough they are."

Since the ceasefire took effect, Hamas has released 21 hostages in a series of five exchanges for more than 730 Palestinian prisoners. A second phase calls for the return of all remaining hostages and an indefinite extension of the truce. However, Trump's statements about both the pending releases and plans for post-war Gaza have destabilized its fragile architecture.

It wasn't immediately clear whether Netanyahu's threat referred to the three hostages scheduled for release on Saturday or all the remaining hostages, which would be a departure from the terms of the ceasefire. Netanyahu's office said it "welcomed President Trump's demand."

As Trump spoke to report-



Displaced Palestinians make their way from central Gaza to their homes in the northern Gaza Strip, Monday, Feb. 10, 2025.

Associated Press

ers in Washington and reasserted his demands, an Israeli official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a private meeting, said Israel was "sticking to Trump's announcement regarding the release of the hostages. Namely, that they will all be released on Saturday." Netanyahu's office also said it ordered the military to mobilize troops on and around the Gaza Strip in preparation for scenarios that could arise.

Trump has said Israel should cancel the entire ceasefire if all of the roughly 70 hostages aren't freed by Saturday. Hamas brushed off his threat Tuesday, doubling down on its claim that Israel has violated the ceasefire and warned that it would only continue releasing hostages if all parties adhered to the ceasefire. "Trump must remember there is an agreement that must be respected by both parties. This is the only way to bring back prisoners," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said Tuesday. "The language of threats has no value; it only complicates matters."

Trump is hosting King Abdullah II in Washington as he escalates pressure on Jordan to take in refugees from Gaza, perhaps permanently, as part of his audacious plan to remake

the Middle East. "We're not going to buy anything. We're going to have it," Trump said of U.S. control of Gaza as the Jordanian king stood by. Abdullah II was asked repeatedly by reporters about Trump's plan to remake the Middle East, but didn't make substantive comments. He also did not comment on the idea that a large number of refugees from Gaza could be welcomed in Jordan, where millions of Palestinian refugees already reside. Palestinians and the international community have seethed over Trump's recent comments that any Palestinians potentially expelled from Gaza would not have a right to return. □

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Corruption survey gives many nations worst scores in over a decade. South Sudan slides to the bottom

By **GEIR MOULSON**
Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Many countries had their worst showing in more than a decade in an index released Tuesday that serves as a barometer of public sector corruption worldwide, from leading powers such as the United States and France to authoritarian nations such as Russia and Venezuela. Transparency International, which compiles the annual Corruption Perceptions Index, found that 47 countries out of the 180 it surveyed had their lowest score last year since it started using its current methodology for its global ranking in 2012. It said of its 2024 survey that “global corruption levels remain alarmingly high, with efforts to reduce them faltering.”

The group also pointed to worldwide risks from corruption to efforts to combat climate change. It said that a lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms increases the risk of climate funds being embezzled or misused, while



Russian President Vladimir Putin, accompanied by head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov inspects NATO military trophies captured in the battles in Ukraine, during his visit to the Russian Special Forces University in Gudermes, Chechen Republic, Russia, Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2024.

“undue influence,” often from the private sector, obstructs the approval of ambitious policies.

The organization measures the perception of public sector corruption according to 13 data sources, in-

cluding the World Bank, the World Economic Forum and private risk and consulting companies. It ranks 180 countries and territories on a scale from a “highly corrupt” 0 to a “very clean” 100.

The global average remained unchanged from 2023 at 43, with more than two-thirds of countries scoring under 50, Transparency International said. Denmark held on to first place with an unchanged 90 points,

Associated Press

followed by Finland with 88 and Singapore with 84. New Zealand dropped from third to fourth, shedding two points to 83. South Sudan slid to the bottom of the index with just eight points, displacing Somalia although the latter country's score dropped to nine. They were followed by Venezuela with 10 and Syria with 12.

The U.S. slid from 69 points to 65 and from 24th place to 28th. Transparency International pointed to criticism of its judicial branch. It noted that the U.S. Supreme Court adopted its first code of ethics in 2023, “but serious questions remain about the lack of meaningful, objective enforcement mechanisms and the strength of the new rules themselves.”

Other Western nations on the decline included France, which dropped four points to 67 and five places to 25th; and Germany, down three points to 75 and six places to 15th. It tied with Canada, which was down one point and three places. □

Ukraine and Russia trade long-range attacks as officials probe possibilities for peace

By **ILLIA NOVIKOV** **Associated Press**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces targeted Ukraine's energy and gas infrastructure in a “massive” nighttime missile attack and Ukrainian drones struck an important oil refinery inside Russia, officials said Tuesday, as the near three-year war rumbled on against a backdrop of renewed diplomatic efforts to end it.

Ukraine's state energy company, Ukrenergo, said it imposed emergency blackouts due to the Russian attack. Russia has repeatedly hammered Ukraine's power grid throughout the war. Meanwhile, as part of its long-range drone campaign against targets deep inside Russia, Ukraine hit a refinery in Russia's Saratov region about 500 kilometers (300 miles) from Ukraine's



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaks during the briefing with President of the European Investment Bank Nadia Calvino in Kyiv, Ukraine, Monday, Feb. 10, 2025.

Associated Press

border, the Army General Staff claimed. The facility produces gasoline, fuel oil and diesel fuel for the Russian military, it said. International efforts are afoot to stop the fighting, with President Donald

Trump's senior advisers expected to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy later this week on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference to discuss a path toward ending the war.

Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia, are among the U.S. administration officials traveling to Germany for the summit.

Zelenskyy said late Monday that Trump's representatives will visit Ukraine this week, ahead of Munich, though he didn't provide details.

Trump said he was sending Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent to Ukraine to meet with Zelenskyy.

“This war must and will end soon too much death and destruction,” Trump said on his Truth Social platform. “The U.S. has spent billions of dollars globally, with little to show. When America is strong, the world is at peace.”

†The Ukrainian government

aims to sidestep new U.S. tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, according to Ukraine's First Deputy Prime Minister and Economic Development Minister, Yuliia Svyrydenko.

Metallurgical products make up nearly 58% of Ukrainian exports to the U.S., earning Ukraine just over \$500 million last year, she said.

Ukraine is also offering to make a deal with Trump for continued American military aid in exchange for developing Ukraine's mineral industry, including rare earth elements needed for modern technology.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 124 Shahed and decoy drones across Ukraine overnight. In addition, at least 19 Russian missiles of various types hit Ukrainian gas production facilities, it said. □

Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around



in the water long enough is "Sea glass.

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry! Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass,

household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass. Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car



tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we

did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! ☐

How Aruban beaches came to be!

(Oranjestad)—We've talked about the best beaches to visit on the island before, but have you ever wondered how Aruba got its white, sandy beaches, and why there's a clear difference between the northern and southern shores? Here are some fun facts about the development of Aruban beaches.

How did Aruba get its white, sandy beaches?

Aruba's beaches have de-

veloped over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over time, resulting in its gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals also contribute to this, one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals,

sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.

The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south—the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean floors—has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean



floor is much deeper, there is no sand present—they were swept away with the current!

Why north deep, but south shallow?

Ah! Good question...and interesting phrasing.

Aruba is a continental island. The island actually forms part of South America, and the space

between Aruba and the South American continent is simply referred to as land that runs under the ocean. This is why it gets gradually deeper in the south, whereas the ocean floor in the north runs steeply to the bottom. ☐

Source: archival document provided by the National Archive of Aruba (ANA).





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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their



years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

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- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Ambassadors
Mr. Kevin and Mrs. Dawn Bellinger from Davidson, North Carolina, United States.

Mrs. Keyttin Silva representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honoree was:

- Beautiful beaches
- Best accommodation at Manchebo
- Safe environment
- Friendly Arubans
- Great restaurants

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

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A quick snack for the road: Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!

(Oranjestad)—If you ever been to Aruba before, you probably heard of (and even tried) the Aruban Pastechi. Beloved by young and old, this tasty treat is a staple for party snacks, a quick lunch or even breakfast!

Here's how to make the Pastechi dough.

Ingredients:

4 cups of wheat flour
1 tbsp baking powder (if using self-rising flour, omit baking powder)
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp sugar
0.5 cup of melted butter
1 cup water
1 egg

Directions:

Sift your flour into a bowl and add all the dry ingredients before giving it a quick mix. Next add the butter, water and egg and mix until thor-

oughly combined. At this point, your dough will start to get sticky; time for an arm workout. Knead your dough into the bowl you are using or on a clean surface with some flour lightly dusted until its surface is smooth. You'll know your dough is ready when it doesn't stick to your hands or the surface on which you're kneading it. Let your dough rest covered for 15-20 minutes.

After resting, divide your dough into approximately 100 gram balls and roll it flat with a rolling pin. The thickness of the pastechi depends on your taste, but the average thinness would be around ¼ inch or so.

Filling for the pastechis varies according to your taste. The easiest and most common filling you'll find in Aruba is a simple cheese filling. For

this, we usually use shredded Gouda, but feel free to use any cheese that melts well when frying the pastry.

Place the filling on your rolled out piece of dough, fold it in half and pinch the sides shut with a fork. If you have a folding tool, feel free to use it for this process. Your pastechi is ready for the fryer!

If you want to store some pastechis for later use, you can freeze them. A good tip is to place a piece of wax paper in between each pastechi if you are to store



them on top of one another. This way the pastechis don't stick to each other when defrosting.

Here in Aruba we enjoy pastechi at any time of the day, but it has become almost tradition to eat paste-

chis for breakfast on the way to work. Many roadside snack trucks sell pastechi from early morning to noon, and offer a variety of fillings like cheese; ham and cheese; ground beef and pulled chicken to name a few. □

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

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Seeds and Stars, our Cosmic connection

Episode CCXC- 290

The narrative shared through Etnia Nativa emphasizes the importance of reclaiming and recognizing the island's cultural roots and heritage, which have often been overshadowed by colonial history. The platform actively engages in promoting the value of rediscovering native traditions, history and identity. During this episode we share two important connections to ancient agriculture.

The connection between agriculture, astronomy, and the solstices lies in how astronomical knowledge of the Earth's cycles helped early societies predict seasonal changes, plan agricultural activities, and structure their calendars and rituals around these key points of the year, being deeply interconnected, especially in the context of how ancient societies understood the cycles of the Earth and the seasons.

These three areas are well related since agriculture is all about growing crops, which requires understanding the best times to plant and harvest. These times are often influenced by the seasons, which are in turn determined by the Earth's orbit around the Sun.

Farming practices have historically been tied to celestial events, because these events signal the changing of the seasons.

Meanwhile, astronomy helps us understand the movement of the Earth in relation to the Sun, the Moon, and other celestial bodies.

Since ancient times, farmers and cultures have relied on observations of the stars, sun, and moon to guide agricultural and many other practices. The Earth's tilt on its axis (about 23.5 degrees) causes the Sun to appear at different positions in the sky throughout the year, creating the seasonal cycle.

Astronomical knowledge allowed early civilizations to observe and determine the optimal planting and harvest times by cataloging the Sun's path, the positions of certain stars, and, most importantly, the solstices.

The solstices are key astronomical events that mark the turning points in the Earth's orbit. The summer Solstice occurs around June 21st, when the North Pole is tilted closest to the Sun, and it marks the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and, in many cultures, it was a time of celebrating abundance.

The Winter Solstice around December 21st is the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere (and the longest in the Southern Hemisphere). It marks the



beginning of winter but also signals the point when the days start getting longer again—an important event for early societies as it suggests the return of warmth and the eventual coming of spring.

The solstices often indicate seasonal shifts in the environment, signaling to agricultural societies when to begin planting (spring) or when to prepare for harvest (fall). For example, the winter solstice might have marked a time when people knew the days would get longer, allowing them to plan their spring planting.

Ancient agricultural societies relied heavily on the lunar and solar cycles, which helped them, develop early calendars. For example, the Mayans, Egyptians, and our Caquetian culture, for example, developed their own sky calendars based on the positions of the Sun, Moon, and stars, knowledge that was transmitted from generation to generation. This was not only for agricultural purposes but also for sea traveling, hunting, and fishing.

Many agricultural societies had festivals and rituals tied to the solstices, of-

ten to ensure the favor of nature spirits resulting in a successful harvest or to mark important moments in the agricultural cycle. For example, cultures like the ancient Egyptians celebrated the summer solstice in relation to the rising of the star Sirius, which signaled the start of the Nile's flood season—a critical time for agriculture in Egypt. Native Americans followed the movement of planet Venus.

The solstices helped farmers know when to expect the first rains or the end of the rainy season, guiding them to plant crops at the most beneficial times. On Aruba, we celebrated "Dera Gai", time for the burying of the hen, marking the end of the island harvesting season and the burning of the dry corn stacks (see episode 158 "Aruban roots"). The seasonal changes also play a significant role in animal husbandry and migration patterns and especially to determine the arrival of sea turtles that come to lay their eggs on our beaches. □

If you enjoyed reading our stories and are interested in learning more regarding the true identity, we recommend you to book a visit to Etnia Nativa—the only "living museum of its kind in the Caribbean"—a fascinating choice, a trend setter since 1994 and co-founder of Aruba National Park, Archaeological Museum Aruba and Artisan Foundation among others. Etnia Nativa shares valuable knowledge and connects you to the ancient island's spirit and soul.

Whats App+297 592 2702
etnianativa03@gmail.com



Meet our Aruban trailblazers: Padu Lampe

(Oranjestad)—This week we remember one of our most beloved Aruban giant, Juan Chabaya Lampe—better known as Padu Lampe or Padu del Caribe. As one of the most important and renowned artists in the Aruban cultural sphere, Padu's long career led him to be honored today as "the father of culture."

On April 26th, 1920, Juan Chabaya Lampe "Padu Lampe/Padu del Caribe" was born in Nassaustraat, Oranjestad. He grew up in a happy musical environment, and it is because of this that he developed a love for music. Starting from the age of 12, he was agile in the clarinet, mandolin and cuatro. Henry Lampe, his father, was also a well-known pianist and musician.

In a publication of the informative seminar, "Observer", from august 1st, 1962, Padu's many merits and friendly personality stood out. It was said that he was an excellent pianist with a personal style and full of surprises. Secondly, though the composer was not too familiar with music theory, he showed innovations in his compositions. Lastly, Padu was a promoter of Creole music around the world.

One of the most important moments in Aruban history, in which he was able to witness first-hand, was the first radio broadcast on the island on March 20th, 1954. Here, he was accompanied by



Antillean guitarist Julian Coco and Hubert "Loi" Booi.

In the art world, Padu was also a known painter. During his youth, he made several paintings using his unique style. In 1939, he participated in an art exhibit in New York, where he won a bronze medal for his painting "Typical View of Aruba."

Padu remained a popular artist within the Dutch Antilles and the Caribbean as a pianist, singer, author and painter. Padu Lampe was a local artist who became renowned in Venezuela, Colombia, The U.S. and The Netherlands too. In the 1950s, he sold no less than 50 thousand copies of his long-playing albums (LPs).



Padu Lampe was a multifaceted artist, inspired by his interest in parapsychology and supernatural phenomenon. He wrote three books in Papiamentu on the subject in 1986, which was published by the Aruban National Printing Press with sponsorship provided by the Prince Bernhard Funds Netherlands Antilles.

Besides that, Padu passed his exam on "Society to Advanced Ethical Hypnosis" in 1964 in New Jersey. He received a certificate as a hypnotechnician, which gave him the authority to practice hypnosis in some states.

Over the course of his career, he received many accolades and awards in Aruba, Curacao, Venezuela and the Netherlands.

Padu del Caribe passed away on November 29th, 2019, at the age of 99 years old. Padu brought the Aruban culture around the world.

His legacy will remain ingrained in the Aruban cultural history, and he will be known forever as one of the most influential trailblazers of our community.

Padu will always be in Aruba's heart, because he had composed various special songs dedicated to the mothers of the island; his song "Sonrisa di un baby" ("A baby's Smile") has been written in three different languages. Padu also wrote our national anthem "Aruba Dushi Tera", along with Mr. Rufo Wever. This song was approved by the government of Aruba and was named the official anthem of the island in 1976.

Other songs that have been considered as being almost a second anthem for Arubans is the special composition he wrote for his wife Daisy Croes called "Abo so". Daisy later passed away in 1994. □

Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.



As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law,

Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives. At the end of the eighteen

century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista,

people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and

Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □

CROSSWORD

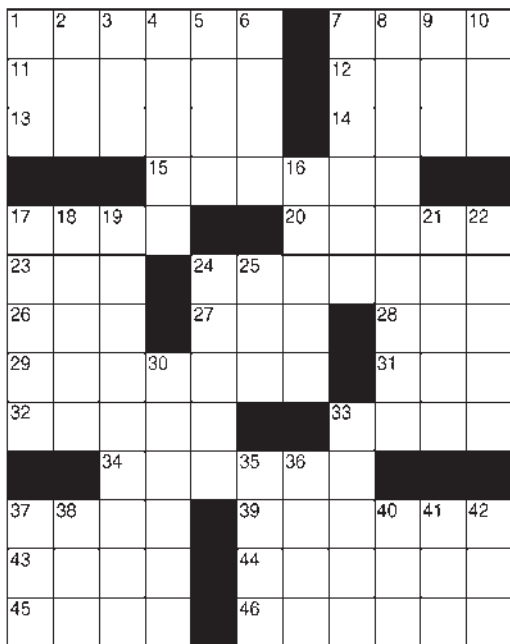
By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS

- 43 Polite fellow
44 Arthurian island
45 Casino figure
46 Words on a candy heart

DOWN

- 1 Child
2 Rage
3 Distress signal
4 Disparaging
5 Simple
6 Perfect place
7 Benders
8 Tree's core
9 Screw up
10 Word on a bill
16 Dance units
17 Writer
18 Flower part
19 Nation's center
21 Ham's need
22 Skating jumps
24 Rodeo horse
25 Consume
30 Perches
33 Tea-growing region of India
35 Swift horse
36 Valentine word
37 In the past
38 Went ahead
40 Inventor Whitney
41 Great weight
42 Count start



2-14

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-14

CRYPTOQUOTE

SLD NKJE SLHKX FD KDIDG
XDS DKNWXL NY HR JNID; TKZ
SLD NKJE SLHKX FD KDIDG
XHID DKNWXL NY HR JNID.

— LDKGE BHJJDG

Cryptoquote: YOU MAY NEVER
KNOW WHAT RESULTS COME OF YOUR
ACTIONS, BUT IF YOU DO NOTHING, THERE
WILL BE NO RESULTS. — MAHATMA GANDHI

Cruise ship Schedule: February 11 - 18 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	11	CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	12	SEA CLOUD SPIRIT	08.00	14.00	G	1
		GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
THU	13	SEVEN SEAS NAVIGATOR	07.00	17.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN JADE	07.00	20.00	C	1
		MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	I	1
SAT	15	MAJESTIC PRINCESS	07.00	16.00	B	1
		AIDAPERLA	08.00	18.00	C	1
		STAR PRIDE	06.00	18.00	I	1
MON	17	RESILIENT LADY	09.00	23.59	C	1
TUE	18	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN VIVA	13.00	21.00	I	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

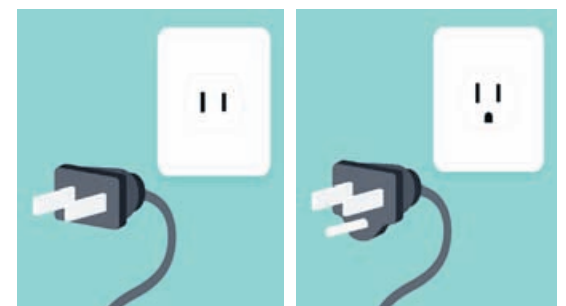
The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



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2 Bed WK 7 and 14 - all views

GOLD SEASON

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2 Bed Ocean view \$14,500
2 Bed Garden view \$13,000
3 Bed Ocean view \$30,000

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1 Bed Ocean front \$23,000
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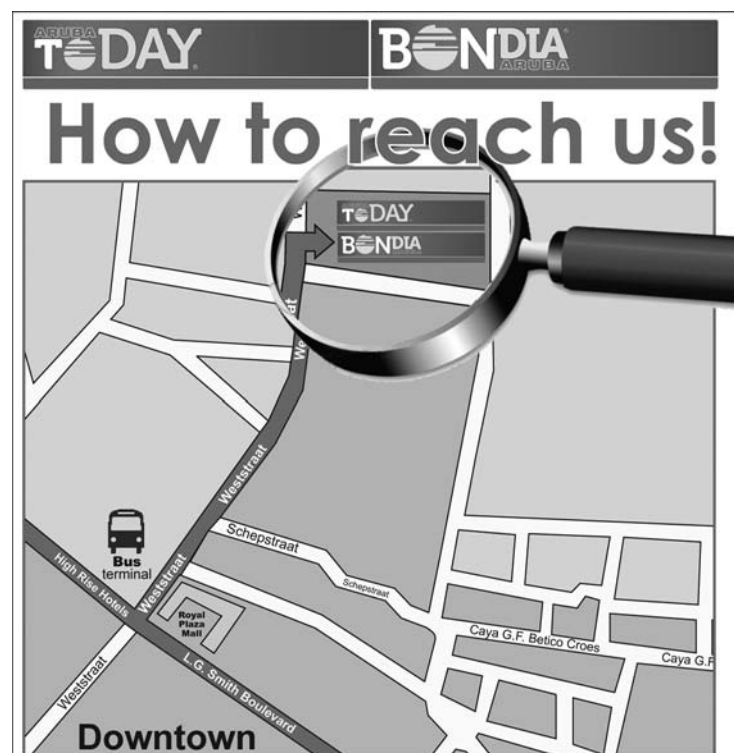
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Female protagonists reach parity with men in top-grossing films of 2024

By JAKE COYLE
AP Film Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — For the first time in recent history, the percentage of top-grossing films featuring female protagonists equaled the percentage of films with male protagonists, according to a pair of annual studies released Tuesday. Movies like “Wicked,” “Inside Out 2” and “The Substance” lifted Hollywood’s theatrical releases to gender parity in leading roles in 2024. Of the 100 top domestic grossing films in 2024, 42% had female protagonists, and 42% had male protagonists, according to a report issued by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University. The USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, which also released its annual study Tuesday, found that 54% of the top 100 films at the box office in 2024 featured girls and women as protagonists. That’s a massive jump



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Cynthia Erivo, left, and Ariana Grande in a scene from the film “Wicked.”

from just the year prior, when 30% of films featured women in lead roles. In 2007, when the USC annual study began, that figure was just 20%. “This is the first time we can say that gender equality has been reached in top-grossing films,” Stacy L. Smith, founder of the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, said in a statement. “In 2024, three of the top five films had a girl or woman in a leading role, as did five of the top 10 films including the number one film of the year, Disney’s ‘Inside Out 2,’” added Smith. “We have always known that female-identified

leads would make money. This is not the result of an economic awakening but is due to a number of different constituencies and efforts at advocacy groups, at studios, through DEI initiatives to assert the need for equality on screen.” Other metrics suggested the gains in leading roles masked still-endemic disparity throughout Hollywood. The percentage of female characters in speaking roles increased from 35% to 37% in 2024, according to the San Diego State study. Major female characters rose from 38% in 2023 to 39% in 2024. “Films such as ‘The Sub-

stance’ pushed back hard against a culture that considers women disposable,” Lauzen stated. “While the number of films with female protagonists rose to a historic high in 2024 after a dismally lean 2023, the percentages of women in the more stable categories of major and speaking roles reflected only minor gains.” Universal Studios, which is led by Donna Langley, was the studio with the best record for female representation. In 2024, 66.7% of Universal releases centered on girls and women, according to the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. Neither study captures the

large number of films released directly on streaming platforms or films that fall outside the top 100 movies in theaters. But for decades, those top box-office films have offered a snapshot of a film industry that has long failed to come close to reflecting the demographics of American society. That remains the case for underrepresented racial or ethnic groups, who account for roughly 42% of the U.S. population. In the top 2024 films in 2024, 25% included an underrepresented lead or co-lead, according to Annenberg. In those 25 movies, the lead or co-leads were 38% Black, 15.4% Asian or Asian American and 3.9% Hispanic. That was a substantial decrease from 2023, when 37 leads or co-leads were people of color. “The progress we saw for female-identified leads was not matched by the findings for underrepresented leads,” said Smith. “This downturn signifies a lack of investment in storytelling that reflects the audience as a whole. The reality is that audiences want to see stories about women and people of color studios and filmmakers do not have to choose between the two.”

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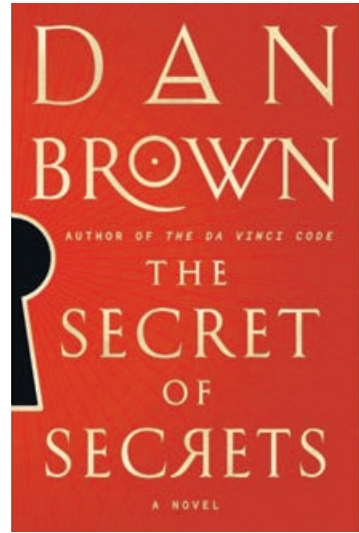
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Dan Brown’s next thriller, ‘The Secret of Secrets,’ to be published Sept. 9

By HILLEL ITALIE
AP National Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Dan Brown’s next global, multi-tiered thriller finds protagonist Robert Langdon journeying from Prague to New York to London as he evades a would-be assassin and ponders the depths of human consciousness. Doubleday announced Wednesday that “The Secret of Secrets,” his first Langdon novel since “Origin” came out in 2017, will be published Sept. 9. Brown, best known for the blockbuster “The Da Vinci Code,” is calling it his “most

intricately plotted and ambitious novel.” “Writing it has been an unforgettable journey of discovery,” he said in a statement. Brown’s new novel begins with Langdon, the Harvard symbologist, in Prague. According to Doubleday, he plans to see a lecture by noetic scientist and emerging love interest Katherine Solomon, only to have her talk become a murder scene and for Solomon to disappear. “As the plot expands into London and New York, Langdon desperately searches for Katherine . . . and for answers,”

Doubleday announced. “In a thrilling race through the dual worlds of futuristic science and mystical lore, he uncovers a shocking truth about a secret project that will forever change the way we think about the human mind.” Brown has set previous books in France, Italy and Spain among other countries and researches his locations in person. He said in a statement that his fascination with Prague “began with its deep history of mysticism and the occult. It is a labyrinth of enigmatic sites an ideal backdrop for



This cover image released by Doubleday shows “The Secret of Secrets” by Dan Brown. (Doubleday via Associated Press)

a Robert Langdon thriller a city of secrets, both ancient and modern.”

It's time to revalue running backs after Saquon Barkley caps best rushing year with Super Bowl win

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**
AP Pro Football Writer

It's time to revalue the devalued running back position in the NFL after Saquon Barkley's mere presence, if not his production, helped the Philadelphia Eagles dismantle the Kansas City Chiefs in one of the most lopsided Super Bowls ever. Barkley capped a great year for free-agent running backs by hoisting the Lombardi Trophy after the Eagles' 40-22 dismantling of the Chiefs on Sunday that avenged a heartbreaking Super Bowl loss two years earlier and denied Patrick Mahomes & Co. an unprecedented third consecutive title and Pat Riley royalties for all that three-peat merchandise now headed for the dump.

Barkley, who had seven total touchdown runs of 60 yards or more in his first season with the Eagles, gained a modest 57 yards on 25 carries Sunday, and he gave props to Steve Spagnuolo's defense for slowing him down.

Barkley's biggest contribution, however, was in forcing



Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley celebrates with the Vince Lombardi Trophy after the NFL Super Bowl 59 football game against the Kansas City Chiefs, Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025, in New Orleans.

ing the Chiefs to load the box with extra defenders, which freed up the likes of DeVonta Smith, A.J. Brown and Jahan Dotson to make crucial catches as Jalen Hurts threw just five incompletions while accounting for nearly 300 yards of offense and three touch-

downs.

John Elway was blown out in his first three trips to the Super Bowl before capping his Hall of Fame playing career with back-to-back titles once fellow Hall of Famer Terrell Davis joined him in the Denver Broncos' backfield.

"A great running back is a quarterback's best friend," Elway said more than once when looking back on his Super Bowl successes. Speaking of Davis, by halftime Barkley surpassed Davis' all-time rushing yards record in a season of 2,476 while becoming the first

player to top 2,500 yards, counting playoffs.

Mahomes, meanwhile, sure could have used a good ground game Sunday.

Behind a spongy offensive line that left him battered, Mahomes handed off just seven times and the Chiefs, who had won 23 of their previous 25 games, trailed 34-0 before they ever crossed midfield.

Kareem Hunt gained 9 yards on three carries, Isiah Pacheco managed 7 yards on three carries and Samaje Perine reeled off an 8-yard gain on his only handoff.

Like Hurts, who led Philly with 72 yards on the ground, Mahomes was KC's leading rusher, with 25 yards on four runs.

The rest of the time, Mahomes was desperately trying to avoid the Eagles' destructive four-man pass rush that sacked him six times, forced him into three turnovers and was so consistently effective that coordinator Vic Fangio never once had to dial up a blitz to rattle him. □

Associated Press

Think you can make a halfcourt shot in front of the fans at halftime? Odds are 50-1 against you

By **The Associated Press**

Every night, random fans are picked out of the stands at games big and small to participate in contests that test their skill and promise a prize, sometimes a big one, if they're successful. Halfcourt shooting contests have a long history at high school, college and professional basketball games. In recent years, contests requiring fans to putt a golf ball the length of the court into a small slot have become popular. That's how a fan at a recent Nebraska game recently won a \$75,000 Porsche.

Some numbers associated with these in-game contests:

1993

The year Chicago Bulls fan Don Calhoun swished a

shot of about 80 feet, from the opposite free-throw line, to win \$1 million. The Bulls and sponsors paid Calhoun after the insurance company reneged, saying he was disqualified because he had played in a handful of junior college basketball games. Calhoun's million-dollar shot is considered the moment in-game contests took off in popularity.

1 in 2

Chances a random fan will make a free throw, according to contest insurer SCA Promotions.

1 in 7

Chances a random fan will make a 3-point shoot, according to SCA.

1 in 50

Chances a random fan will make a halfcourt shot, according to contest the

insurer Interactive Promotions Group. SCA Promotions sets the chances at 1 in 49.

1 in 100

Chances a random fan will make a length-of-the-court putt (94 feet) into a 3-by-3 inch slot, according to IPG and SCA.

1 in 200

Chances a random hockey fan will make a shot from center ice into a 4-inch slot at the bottom of a board covering the goal 89 feet away, according to SCA.

\$1,000

Estimated insurance premium for SCA to cover the risk of having to give away \$10,000 in a halfcourt shooting contest, according to SCA vice president Chris Hamman. The premium would cover five

attempts by five different contestants.

\$16,200

Insurance premium paid to IPG to cover the risk of Porsche of Omaha dealer-

ship having to give away a \$75,000 Porsche Macan to Travis Weber, who made a 94-foot putt into a 3-by-3 inch slot in Nebraska's Putt for a Porsche contest. □



Phoenix Suns' Eric Bledsoe (2) high fives fan Tim Boven after Boven hit a three point field goal for \$77,777 during a time out during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the New York Knicks, Friday, March 28, 2014, in Phoenix.

Associated Press



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The big question going into NBA All-Star weekend: Will the new format work?

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

Red Auerbach once got ejected from an All-Star Game for arguing a call. Rick Barry and Bob Cousy each fouled out of All-Star Games twice, the only players who can say that. Dwyane Wade was whistled for the first flagrant All-Star foul after breaking Kobe Bryant's nose.

As the story goes, Wade called Bryant not long after that 2012 game and attempted to apologize. Turned out, there was no need. Wade's recollection of what Bryant said? "Bro, I love it," Wade said in a conversation with Kevin Garnett, a clip that has been a social media standard ever since.

The NBA doesn't want coaches to get kicked out, anyone to get into foul trouble or anyone getting hurt. But they've asked, begged and pleaded for years with players in an effort to get the All-Star Game get taken more seriously. And the latest solution is a radical one: a mini-tournament. Welcome to an All-Star format like none other: three games, no clock, first team to 40 points wins, eight-man rosters, and there's a reasonable chance that the team leaving San Francisco on Sunday as winners will have captured that title without having a single All-Star on its roster.

"We went back to the drawing board," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. Here's the big question going into Sunday: Will it work? To be fair, there were skeptics when Silver added a play-in tournament to determine the final two play-off spots in the Eastern and Western Conferences; by all accounts, the play-in



Phoenix Suns forward Kevin Durant, right, drives to the basket past Portland Trail Blazers center Deandre Ayton during overtime of an NBA basketball game Monday, Feb. 3, 2025, in Portland, Ore.

Associated Press

has been a smashing success. There were skeptics when Silver added an in-season tournament now called the NBA Cup; some players say they still don't totally understand the format, but the first two Cup final four weekends in Las Vegas have been big hits as well.

Now, this. The NBA thinks players don't want to go to a 48-minute All-Star Game and play hard for a full game. Perfectly understandable. The proposed solution: short games, where nobody will have to play for long and there's little room for error since only 40 points are needed to win.

Kevin Durant's first response? "I hate it. Absolutely hate it. Terrible," the Phoenix star and 15-time All-Star said when the league announced the plan in December, though he quickly noted that his initial reaction could have

been worded differently. Perhaps he could have taken the route that perennial All-Star forward Anthony Davis, then of the Los Angeles Lakers and now of the Dallas Mavericks, took when he was asked in December what he thinks of the NBA's new plan.

"I don't really like it," Davis said. "But we'll see how it goes this year and see if they change it again or not."

And it could change again, possibly as early as next year.

Some players want the traditional East vs. West format, although the league went back to that last year and it was a 211-186 game all dunks and 3-pointers, pretty much that broke records and forced the NBA to break the mold on the format.

The NBA tried a target score approach; no clock in the fourth quarter and have the teams chase a set to-

tal to ensure that the game ends on a made basket. Some years it worked, some years not so much. They tried having playing captains pick the teams; again, success was mixed. Next up, the tournament. There is a prize pool of \$1.8 million for the All-Star tournament. Each player on the All-Star champion team gets \$125,000, each player on the runner-up team will get \$50,000 and the players on the teams eliminated in the semifinals will each get \$25,000.

"I don't know if everyone understands how this is going to go," said Miami's Tyler Herro, who'll make his All-Star debut this weekend. "But everyone will want to win."

There are four teams in the tournament: three teams picked by Shaquille O'Neal, Kenny Smith and Charles Barkley from the pool of 24 All-Stars, and the fourth will be the team that

wins the Rising Stars event on Friday night. The Rising Stars players aren't All-Stars. Some aren't even in the NBA right now; there's a G League team in that event. And the Rising Stars winner could win the All-Star Game meaning, yes, guys who aren't currently in the league could win the thing. Whichever way it shakes out, it will be a massive deviation from last year when the East and West each scored at least 42 points in every quarter.

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 50 points on his own last year; it'll take only 40 for a team to win a game this year.

"Them trying to shake things up is expected and makes sense," Oklahoma City All-Star Shai Gilgeous-Alexander said. "But at the end of the day, it's going to come down to whether the players wanting to go at it, and I would love to see that. Love to be a part of that for sure, and hopefully it happens."

Heat forward Kevin Love who proudly says he took part in All-Star Games where players were competitive and even strategized in the locker rooms before games and at halftimes doesn't know when the All-Star Game changed.

He thinks it became part of the evolution within the game; more 3-pointers are shot than ever before and that, combined with everyone just treating it like an exhibition and not Game 7 of the NBA Finals, led to the defense-optional approach the league doesn't want to see anymore.

"I'll tell you if this will work," Love said.

"I'll tell you on Sunday." □